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NATIONAL DRUG POLICY BOARD

Washington, D.C. 20530

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Honorable Edwin Meese III
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

As detailed in his April 29, 1988 letter to you, the Drug Intelligence Strategy and Implementation Plan receives relatively good marks from Congressman English. He urges that we improve our strategy in two ways -- ascertain the amount of "interdiction" resources devoted to intelligence and produce better threat assessments, especially air threat assessments. I think both suggestions have some merit.

Presumably Mr. English would have us increase resources devoted to intelligence collection and analysis because of the relatively high payoff from good intelligence. This is why the National Drug Intelligence Committee (NDIC) has adopted the policy that "good intelligence...is the first among priorities and must be developed to support each of the major drug abuse functions..." (page 1 of the NDIC Strategy.)

There are inherent difficulties in isolating resources devoted to the apparently separate strategies of interdiction, investigation, and intelligence. These strategies are in fact inextricably intertwined in field

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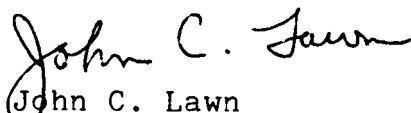
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drug enforcement activities. Nevertheless, if we are to determine what portion of interdiction resources are mostly devoted to intelligence collection and analysis, I recommend that the Policy Board Staff and OMB establish definitional and budgetary guidelines.

On the issue of improved threat assessments, I would state simply that threat assessments will improve as we systematically address collection requirements, drug information collection, analysis, and coordination of finished drug intelligence reports. This will be true for air smuggling as well as for all other modes of drug smuggling. The NDIC Strategy requires systematic improvements from collection of information to distribution of finished intelligence, and it will lead to improved drug intelligence products, including threat assessments.

A copy of this letter will be sent to all NDIC members together with Congressman English's critique of the intelligence strategy.

Sincerely,



John C. Lawn
Chairman, National Drug
Intelligence Committee

cc: NDIC Members
Mr. Pickens

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ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS

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Congress of the United States

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GOVERNMENT INFORMATION, JUSTICE, AND AGRICULTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

8-349-C RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

April 29, 1988

The Honorable Edwin Meese III
Chairman
National Drug Policy Board
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Chairman Meese:

I am pleased to have finally the opportunity to comment on the National Drug Policy Board's antidrug abuse strategies in their entirety. As you know, I have been critical of the Policy Board in the past for not taking the leadership role assigned to it in the National Narcotics Act of 1984. However, I think the development of a comprehensive strategy is an important step, and the Board is to be congratulated for this difficult achievement.

I would like to add, however, that I am disappointed at the length of time it has taken the Policy Board to provide these documents. At our breakfast meeting on November 18th, I was given the impression that the long-term draft strategies would be delivered in a timely manner for my review and comment. Yet, it was not until after the repeated threat of subpoena that the documents were finally provided. My reasons for demanding the complete, long-term strategies, rather than the fiscal year 1989 implementation plans delivered on March 9th and March 15th, were explained at the Subcommittee's March 24th hearing with Assistant Secretary Keating. There is no need to dwell further on the issue; instead, I would like to offer my comments on the individual sub-strategies.

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The National Interdiction Strategy. In general, I am very supportive of the interdiction strategy. Defense-in-depth is a concept which, when implemented, I believe will have a significant impact on narcotics smuggling. I basically agree with the assets identified as required for the strategy. However, there are still substantial gaps which need to be filled.

For example, P-3 aircraft, which will be available along the Southwest border, need to be committed as well to surveillance off of the Colombian coast. The long-range surveillance assets identified for that region are inadequate. Over-the-horizon radar is not a realistic alternative, and the Navy has already abandoned its lighter-than-air program due to budget constraints. Therefore, the P-3 aircraft is essential for that long-range detection, and without adequate numbers of the aircraft on station for the required hours, the rest of the air interdiction strategy becomes problematic.

There are large gaps left in the Gulf Coast. Intelligence analyses already identify the west coast of Florida and the Gulf region towards New Orleans as an area used by air smugglers. In addition, the current air traffic there due to oil rig operations makes sorting even more difficult. Do we not need aerostats for that region, as well as additional apprehension aircraft?

There also appears to be little coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration. FAA's participation in air interdiction is essential in the sorting process. Yet, there appears to be no integration of FAA into the strategy.

Both the Maritime and Land Interdiction strategies are excellent. However, the Land strategy does not adequately address the responsibilities and roles of the various agencies involved in the land border strategy. This Subcommittee has repeatedly urged that defined, formal organizational structures be adopted for Operation Alliance that delineate lines of authority. The land border strategy states only that Operation Alliance coordinate with both the Land Interdiction Subcommittee and the Southwest Border Subcommittee of the Policy Board. This structure will not resolve the problems identified during this Subcommittee's review of Operation Alliance.

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I would also suggest applying the "Bold New Initiatives" concept to all of the strategies. It is an idea which should be elevated to the level of a third coordinating group of the Policy Board, a recommendation made also by the Defense Science Board in its study.

Finally, I believe it is essential to include milestones in the strategies. While it is often difficult to continually evaluate programs in terms of milestones, it remains the only way to measure the success or failure of specific programs. However, the target percentage increases included in the interdiction strategies need to be defined. Simply stating that mobile detection should increase by 25 percent does not adequately measure the progress of defense-in-depth. Perhaps requiring that the probability of detection reach a specific goal by a specific date would be a more useful milestone.

Investigations Strategy. The Investigations Strategy is much less reasoned and detailed than the Interdiction Strategy, and thus is perhaps not very useful in terms of being able to assess the progress of a strategy. It fails to set priorities in any meaningful way, makes no attempt to integrate the agencies besides FBI and DEA involved in narcotics investigations (for example, INS, ATF, Marshals Service, etc.), except in passing, and makes little attempt to quantify the assets needed to implement the strategy. It also fails to formally delineate the different responsibilities of DEA and FBI.

Strategy 1, Program 1 is a useful guideline for investigations. However, Program 2, "Priority Investigations Targeting," makes no attempt to prioritize among its 27 objectives. Is Objective 1, "increas[ing] the percentage of DEA Class I and II cases to 50 percent," of a higher priority than Objective 6, "ensur[ing] that 80 percent of FBI investigations are directed at Colombian/South American, Italian, Mexican and other major multinational Drug Trafficking Organizations"? These are all worthy objectives, but shouldn't a long-term strategy make judgments as to which are more valuable?

Likewise, with Strategy 1, Program 3, "State and Local Investigations," it is unclear what input state and local governments have had in developing this program, nor does it appear that any priorities have been indicated. And Strategy 2, Program 1, "Cocaine Suppression Program," is

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essentially either an international program or an interdiction program. The Program does refer to a section of the International Strategy; however, I am not able to evaluate it in that context since I have not yet been provided that particular strategy.

Program 3 makes no assessment of the role of the Forest Service in investigations stemming from the National Forest System. The 1986 Drug Bill gives the Forest Service authority to pursue investigations. Is it, or should it be, part of the Investigations Strategy to give the Forest Service the authority to pursue cannabis investigations off of National Forest land?

Program 4, "Domestic Clandestine Laboratory Program," makes no assessment of where the program should be targeted. Is the priority nationwide, or just in Oregon and California? What if the threat shifts? These questions apply to marijuana eradication, as well.

Finally, Program 2, "Asset Removal," which I believe is an integral part of the strategy, includes no plans of how the funds accumulated in both the Customs and the Justice Department programs should be used for antidrug abuse programs. Nor is there a strategy to streamline the Marshals Service fund even though some changes are desperately needed. In addition, Objective 4 is unintelligible.

In sum, although the Investigations Strategy is comprehensive and a good start, it needs work.

Intelligence Strategy. Since the Intelligence strategy provided to the Subcommittee is not the complete strategy (some of the classified sections have not yet been provided), my comments are limited. I agree that the primary concern with regard to narcotics intelligence is the timely dissemination of tactical information. A significant portion of the Intelligence Strategy deals precisely with that concern, and so I believe it adequately addresses those issues which need to be resolved. It would be useful, though, to include some sort of estimate of the percentage of resources spent on interdiction which is devoted to intelligence. Although intelligence gathering and analysis accounts for a small part of the resources devoted to

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interdiction efforts, it is responsible for a substantial share of the interdiction program's success in detecting and apprehending drug smugglers.

I would recommend that at least some portion of the Intelligence Strategy be devoted to producing better threat assessments than are now available. For example, the Customs Service air threat assessment is inadequate because it depends on the use of threat indicators which are of doubtful value. The indicators reflect Customs' operating patterns and practices, such as the number of transponders attached to suspect aircraft or the number of reported intrusions detected with limited detection assets. Yet, given the limited amount of strategic intelligence regarding the air smuggling threat, the assessments appear to be the best available. Part of the Intelligence Strategy, then, should be devoted to improving the air threat assessments.

Prosecution Strategy. The Prosecution Strategy is a model of a detailed strategy which will serve as a long-range blueprint. It identifies targets for prosecution, defines those targets, explains why those targets have been chosen, and assigns the amount of Federal resources to be devoted to prosecuting those targets. It also recognizes the prosecution resources needed for increased investigative assets.

I am aware of the complaints by some U.S. Attorneys that the strategy favors those in larger urban areas, since many of the prosecutions in the West and Midwest may be against mid-level targets. As a Member of Congress from Oklahoma, I too am concerned that those U.S. Attorneys not be too tied down to Priority Targets at the expense of mid-level yet promising cases. However, perhaps all that is needed in the strategy is to recognize that the 80 percent goal is an overall, nationwide goal, and does not require each U.S. Attorney to devote that percent of his resources to those Priority 1 cases.

An aid in measuring progress towards this goal might be the development of a quantitative tracking system to determine nationwide the number of cases and attorneys devoted to Priority Targets versus other targets. I do agree, of course, that the number of prosecutions is not an appropriate measure of progress for the reasons outlined in the strategy.

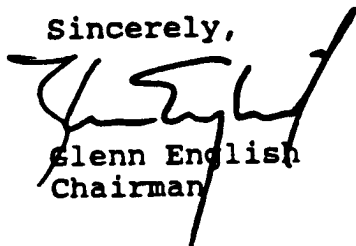
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In addition, the Prosecution Strategy should include an estimate of the number of additional attorneys as well as the number of support staff required in the future for narcotics prosecutions. Do we have the right number currently? Or are 100, 500, or 1000 more needed over the next five years.

In conclusion, none of my comments should be taken as disparaging to the individual strategies. They are an excellent beginning and will prove very useful in the future. I will also provide comments on the demand reduction strategies in the near future.

Sincerely,



Glenn English
Chairman